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SUBJECT: MALI'S MCC COMPACT ENTERS IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

1.(U) On September 11 the Secretary General of the Presidency, Django Sissoko, and the MCC Resident Country Director signed an amendment to Mali's MCC Compact and a linked Governance and Disbursement Agreement (GADA). With the compact officially restructured and agreements with relevant Malian implementing entities in place, Mali's MCC compact has now moved past required preparatory stages and firmly into the implementation phase. Groundbreaking for the first aspect of the MCC project is anticipated in November 2009.

2.(U) The signing ceremony was attended by the Charge d'Affaires; the MCC's local implementing partner, MCA-Mali; and members of the local press corps. The amendment and GADA marked the end of five months of negotiations aimed at revising the Compact to more accurately reflect cost, feasibility and time-based realities.

3.(U) On September 12 the Airports of Mali (ADM), the National Agency for Civil Aviation (ANAC), Energy of Mali (EDM), the National Direction of Health and Pollution Control, and the Office du Niger each signed Implementing Entity Agreements (IEAs) with MCA-Mali at the Prime Minister's office with Prime Minister Modibo Sidibe presiding. Also present were the Charge d'Affaires, the MCC Resident Country Director, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Industry and Commerce, and Equipment and Transport. The signature of these five IEAs gives the Malian Government full responsibility for project management through the design, execution and turnover phases of the Compact. The IEAs also satisfy MCC conditions regarding timely payment of the program.

4.(U) September 2008 also marks a milestone in terms of progress on due diligence, development of technical terms of reference, and the launch of key procurement actions. Three significant project activities are now planned for the coming months, including:

- The Niono-Goma Road Supervision and Works contracts which are in the negotiation phase, with mobilization expected by November 2008.
- The Design and Supervision Contracts for the new Bamako Senou Airport project is in its final review stages, with mobilization expected by December 2008.
- The Alatona Irrigation Infrastructure Supervision and Phase 1 Works contract have been launched, with mobilization projected for January 2009.

5.(SBU) Comment: The September 11 and 12 signing ceremonies signified the beginning of Mali's MCC compact implementation phase and marked two important steps toward tangible progress visible to everyday Malians. President Amadou Toumani Toure has repeatedly expressed his support for the MCC Compact, most recently during an August 16 meeting with Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt, during which he expressed the hope that he would be able demonstrate tangible progress prior to the conclusion of President Bush's administration. President Toure has noted that the length of the MCC's five-year compact, from 2007 to 2012, coincides with his own five-year presidential term and that he views the successful implementation of the MCC Compact as a major part of his legacy for Mali.

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